



To: Maryland General Assembly
By The Maryland Chapter of the Socialist Rifle Association

Senate Bill 0001 is another racist, classist, sexist, bill that seeks to criminalize self-defense of marginalized communities that cannot always rely upon the state to protect them. This is not a new development however, in 1967 the Mulford Act was passed by then-governor Regan. The bill was crafted with the goal of disarming organizations that were fighting for civil rights and advancing community self-defense, a goal that the Socialist Rifle Association shares.

This bill, if passed, would criminalize the carrying of arms for those who have gone through a sixteen-hour training course, a live fire exercise with testing, background check, application fees, fingerprinting, and references. During the period in which Governor Hogan instructed the Maryland State Police to no longer use “good and substantial reason” and now we have not seen an uptick of those with permits committing crimes, endangering the public, or any real danger. On the contrary, our organization has licensed trainers who encourage our members, especially those who face violence from racist, homophobic, or transphobic threats carry with confidence knowing they can defend themselves if they were attacked. We believe that every Marylander deserves the right to feel safe to occupy spaces in public without fear. This is one method we encourage in order to protect ourselves. As our motto says, we keep us safe!

The Maryland chapter of the Socialist Rifle Association strongly rejects the premise that the carrying of arms for self-defense somehow endangers the public, and on the contrary, allows minority groups who are targeted in violent attacks seen across the United States to further be targeted. There has been a large uptick in violence against minority groups and disarming those who frequent locations such as LGBT nightclubs in Maryland are forced to disarm to comply with this law and open themselves up to the risk that they will not be able to fight back if they too are targeted.

The idea for this bill is clearly to suffocate the right to carry so it is functionally obsolete. This goes beyond “sensitive locations” such as schools, hospitals, and government buildings. The bill seeks to prohibit the carrying of arms where the vast majority of Marylanders spend their time. In places of public accommodation, and goes even further to say that Marylanders cannot carry without explicit permission. This will lead to more Marylanders disarming and stowing their handguns in vehicles, leading to an uptick of stolen firearms, and more lives threatened to know the chances of a person carrying in a public space are slim to none.

Gun control broadly also roots itself in class warfare. Those who are wealthy have the ability to live in areas of low crime, and even hire private security or leverage the state to prioritize protection and patrols in the areas where they shop, work, live, and travel. Those who cannot afford such luxury often rely upon themselves and their community to protect against crime or targeted attacks. Currently, the state of Maryland requires all permit holders to take 2 days off, and 16 hours of training to become eligible for a concealed carry permit. Oftentimes these classes are on the weekend which those working in the service industry cannot take time off for. This also includes a substantial fee of not only the training, and fingerprinting, but the permit fee itself of \$75.

Concealed carry permits allow victims of domestic violence who have restraining orders to protect themselves from their abuser. Disarming them in public spaces opens them up to being targeted in public spaces for reprisals. This is not just a theory, in 2017 a New Jersey woman by the name of Carol Bowne was stabbed to death by her ex-boyfriend when the New Jersey police failed to approve her permit in the 30-day time period. This happened when she was returning to her home, in her driveway. We cannot rely only on restraining orders to protect those who are threatened.

The Maryland chapter of the Socialist rifle association strongly urges you to vote no for this bill to reach the floor.